



LVI

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INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *al-wāqi'ah* of the very first verse.

Period of Revelation

According to the chronological order that Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās has given of the Sūrahs, first Sūrah Tā Hā was sent down, then Al-Wāqi'ah and then Ash-Shu'arā' (Suyūti: *Al-Iqān*). The same sequence has been reported from 'Ikrimah. (Baihaqī: *Dalā'il an-Nubuwwat*).

This is supported also by the story that Ibn Hishām has related from Ibn Ishāq about the affirmation of the Faith by Ḥaḍrat 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him). It says that when Ḥaḍrat 'Umar entered his sister's house, Sūrah Tā Hā was being recited. Hearing his voice the people of the house hid the pages of the Qur'an. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar first seized his brother-in-law and when his sister rose in defence of her husband, he hit her also and wounded her on the head. When 'Umar saw blood on his sister, he was sorry for what he had done, and said to her: "Show me the manuscript that you have concealed so that I may see what it contains." The sister said: "You are unclean because of your polytheism: *wa anna-hū lā yamassu-hā illa al-tāhir*: Only a clean person can touch it." So, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar rose and washed himself, and then took up the manuscript to read it. This shows that Sūrah Al-Wāq'ah had been sent down by that time for it contains the verse: *la yamassuhū illa al-muṭahharūn*; and it has been established historically that Ḥaḍrat 'Umar embraced Islam after the first migration to Ḥabash, in the fifth year of the Prophethood.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is the Hereafter, *Tauhid* and refutation of the Makkan disbelievers' suspicions about the Qur'an. What they regarded as utterly incredible was that Resurrection would ever take place, when the entire system of the earth and heavens would be upset, and when all the dead would be resurrected and called to account, after which the righteous would be admitted to Paradise and the wicked cast into Hell. They regarded all this as imaginary, which could not possibly happen in actual fact. In answer to this, it was said: "When the inevitable event will take place, there will be none to belie its happening, nor will anyone have the power to avert it, nor prove it to be an unreal happening. At that time all peoples will be divided into three classes:

- (1) The foremost in rank and position; (2) the common righteous people; and (3) those who denied the Hereafter and persisted in disbelief and polytheism and major sins till the last." How these three classes of the people will be rewarded and punished has been described in detail in vv. 7-56.

Then, in vv. 57-74 arguments have been given, one after the other, to prove the truth of the two basic doctrines of Islam, which the

disbelievers were refusing to accept, viz. the doctrines of *Tauhid* and the Hereafter. In these arguments, apart from every thing else that exists in the earth and heavens, man's attention has been drawn to his own body and to the food that he eats and to the water that he drinks and to the fire on which he cooks his food, and he has been invited to ponder the question: What right do you have to behave independently of, or serve any other than, the God Whose creative power has brought you into being, and Whose provisions sustain you? And how can you entertain the idea that after having once brought you into existence He has become so helpless and powerless that He cannot recreate you once again even if he wills to?

Then, in vv. 75-82 their suspicions in respect of the Qur'an have been refuted and they have been made to realize how fortunate they are that instead of deriving any benefit from the great blessing that the Qur'an is, they are treating it with scant attention and have set only this share of theirs in it that they deny it. If one seriously considers this matchless argument that has been presented in two brief sentences about the truth of the Qur'an, one will find in it the same kind of firm and stable system as exists among the stars and planets of the Universe, and the same is the proof of the fact that its Author is the same Being Who has created the Universe. Then the disbelievers have been told that this Book is inscribed in that Writ of Destiny which is beyond the reach of the creatures, as if to say: "You think it is brought down by the devils to Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), whereas none but the pure angels has any access to the means by which it reaches Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) from the well-guarded Tablet."

In conclusion, man has been warned, as if to say: "You may brag and boast as you like and may shut your eyes to the truths in your arrogance of independence, but death is enough to open your eyes. At death you become helpless: you cannot save your own parents; you cannot save your children; you cannot save your religious guides and beloved leaders. They all die in front of your very eyes while you look on helplessly. If there is no supreme power ruling over you, and your this assumption is correct that you are all in all in the world, and there is no God, then why don't you restore to the dying person his soul? Just as you are helpless in this, so it is also beyond your power to stop Allah

from calling the people to account and mete out rewards and punishments to them. You may or may not believe it, but every dying person will surely see his own end after death. If he belongs to those nearest to God, he will see the good end meant for them; if he be from among the righteous, he will see the end prepared for the righteous; and if he be from among the deniers of the truth, he will see the end destined for the criminals.



إِذَا وَقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ^١ لَيْسَ لَوْفَعَتِهَا كَاذِبَةٌ^٢ خَافِضَةٌ رَافِعَةٌ^٣ إِذَا رُجَّتِ
 الْأَرْضُ رَجًا^٤ وَبُسَّتِ الْجِبَالُ بَسًا^٥ فَكَانَتْ مَبَاءً مُنْبَثًا^٦ وَكُنُفًا^٧ لِرُجَا
 ثَلَاثَةٍ^٨ فَأَصْحَبُ الشِّمَّةِ^٩ مَا أَصْحَبُ الشِّمَّةِ^{١٠} وَأَصْحَبُ الشِّمَّةِ^{١١} مَا
 أَصْحَبُ الشِّمَّةِ^{١٢} وَالشَّيْقُوتُ^{١٣} الشَّقِيُّونَ^{١٤} أُولَئِكَ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ^{١٥} فِي جَنَّاتِ
 النَّعِيمِ^{١٦} ثَلَاثَةٌ^{١٧} مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ^{١٨} وَقَلِيلٌ^{١٩} مِنَ الْآخِرِينَ^{٢٠} عَلَى سُرُرٍ مَوْضُونَةٍ^{٢١}
 مُتَّكِئِينَ عَلَيْهَا مُتَقَابِلِينَ^{٢٢} يَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ وِلْدَانٌ مُخَلَّدُونَ^{٢٣} يَأْكُوبُونَ^{٢٤}

LVI AL-WAQI'AH

الواقعة

Verses: 96

Revealed at Makkah

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

When the inevitable event happens, there shall be none to belie its happening.¹ It will be a calamity which will abase and exalt.² The earth shall be shaken all of a sudden,³ and the mountains shall crumble and become as scattered dust. You, them, shall be divided into three classes:⁴ People of the right hand:⁵ Oh, how (fortunate) shall be the people of the right hand! And the people of the left hand:⁶ Oh, how (unfortunate) shall be the people of the left hand! And the foremost shall still be the foremost.⁷ They will be those nearest (to God). They shall abide in the Gardens of bliss. Most of them will be from among the former people and a few from among those of latter day.⁸ They will be reclining on jewelled couches facing each other.

1. Opening the discourse with this sentence by itself signifies that this is

an answer to the objections that were then being raised in the disbelievers' conferences against Resurrection. This was the time when the people of Makkah had just begun to hear the invitation to Islam from the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon be Allah's peace and blessing). In it what seemed most astonishing and remote from reason to them was that the entire system of the earth and heavens would one day be overturned and then another world would be set up in which all the dead, of the former and the latter generations, would be resurrected. Bewildered they would ask: "This is just impossible! Where will this earth, these oceans, these mountains, this moon and sun go? How will the centuries-old dead bodies rise up to life? How can one in his senses believe that there will be another life after death and there will be gardens of Paradise and the fire of Hell?" Such were the misgivings that were being expressed at that time everywhere in Makkah. It was against this background that it was said: "When the inevitable event happens, there shall be no one to belie it."

In this verse the word "*wāqī'ah*" (event) has been used for Resurrection, which nearly means the same thing as the English word 'inevitable', signifying thereby that it is something that must come to pass. Then, its happening has been described by the word "*waqī'ah*," which is used for the sudden occurrence of a disaster. *Lā isa il waq'at-i-hā kādhibat-un* can have two meanings: (1) That it will not be possible that its occurrence be averted, or stopped, or turned back; or, in other words, there will be no power to make it appear as an unreal event; and (2) that there will be no living being to tell the lie that the event has not taken place.

2. Literally: "that which causes (something or somebody) to rise and to fall." Its one meaning can be that it will upset every order; it will turn things upside-down. Another meaning also can be that it will exalt the lowly and bring low the high and mighty; that is, on its advent the decision as to who is noble and who is ignoble among the people will be made on quite a different basis. Those who posed as honourable people in the world, would become contemptible and those who were considered contemptible would become honourable.

3. That is, it will not be a local earthquake that may occur in a restricted area, but it will shake the whole earth to its depths all of a sudden, and it will experience a tremendous jolt and tremors all through.

4. Although the address apparently is directed to the people to whom this discourse was being recited, or who may read it or hear it read now, in fact the entire mankind is its addressee. All human beings who have been born since the first day of creation and will be born till the Day of Resurrection, will ultimately be divided into three classes.

5. The word *māmanah* in *aṣṣāb al-māmanah*, in the original, may have

been derived from *Yamīn*, which means the right hand, and also from *yumn*, which means good omen. If it is taken to be derived from *yamīn*, *aṣḥāb al-maimanah* would mean: "those of the right hand." This, however, does not imply its lexical meaning, but it signifies the people of exalted rank and position. The Arabs regarded the right hand as a symbol of strength and eminence and honour, and therefore would seat a person whom they wished to do honour, on the right hand, in the assemblies. And if it is taken as derived from *yumn*, *aṣḥāb al-maimanah* would mean fortunate and blessed people.

6. The word *mash'arah* in *aṣḥāb al-mash'arah*, in the original, is from *shu'm* which means misfortune, ill-luck and bad omen; in Arabic the left hand also is called *shūmā*. The Arabs regarded *shimāl* (the left hand) and *shu'm* (bad omen) as synonyms, the left hand being a symbol of weakness and indignity. If a bird flew left on the commencement of a journey, they would take it as a bad omen; if they made a person sit on their left, it meant they regarded him as a weak man. Therefore, *aṣḥāb al-mash'arah* implies ill-omened people, or those who would suffer disgrace and ignominy, and would be made to stand on the left side in the Court of Allah.

7. *Sābiqīn* (the Foremost) implies the people who excelled others in virtue and love of the truth and in good works and responded to the call of Allah and His Messenger before others. They were also in the forefront in their response to the call for *Jihad*, for expending their wealth for the sake of the needy and for public services, or for inviting others to virtue and truth, in short, for spreading the good and wiping out evil and making sacrifices and exerting themselves whenever there was need for it. On this very basis, in the Hereafter too, they will be placed in the forefront.

Thus, mankind, so to say, will be ranged in Allah's Court like this: On the right hand, there will be the righteous, on the left the wicked, and in the forefront (nearest in Divine Presence) the *Sābiqīn* (the Foremost in Faith and good deeds). According to a *Hadīth* reported by Haḍrat 'Ā'ishah the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) asked the people: "Do you know who, on the Day of Resurrection, will be the first to be accommodated under the Divine Shade?" The people said Allah and His Messenger only had the best knowledge. Thereupon the Holy Prophet replied: "Those who were such that when the Truth was presented before them, they accepted it forthwith; when a right was asked of them, they discharged it gracefully; and their decision in respect of others was the same as in respect of their own selves." (Musnad Ahmad).

8. The commentators have differed as to who are implied by the former

أَبَارِئِقَ ۚ وَكَأَيْسَ مِّنْ مَّعِينٍ ۚ لَا يَصْدَعُونَ عَنْهَا وَلَا يُتْرَفُونَ ۚ وَفَالِهَةٌ
مِّنَّا يَتَخَيَّرُونَ ۚ وَكَحْمَرٍ طَيِّبَةٍ مَّا يَشْتَهُونَ ۚ وَخُورٍ عَيْنٍ ۚ كَأَمْثَالِ اللُّؤْلُؤِ
الْمَكُونِ ۚ جَزَاءُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ۚ لَا يَسْعَوْنَ فِيهَا لَفًّا وَلَا تَأْتِيهِمْ ۚ
إِلَّا قِيلًا سَلَامًا سَلَامًا ۚ وَاصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ ۚ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ ۚ فِي سِدْرٍ
مَّخْضُودٍ ۚ وَطَلْحٍ مَّنضُودٍ ۚ وَظِلٍّ مَّمْدُودٍ ۚ وَمَاءٍ مَّسْكُوبٍ ۚ وَفَالِهَةٌ
كَثِيرَةٌ ۚ لَا مَقْطُوعَةٌ وَلَا مَسْنُوعَةٌ ۚ وَفَرَشَ مَرْفُوعَةٌ ۚ إِنَّا أَنشَأْنَاهُنَّ
إِنشَاءً ۚ فَجَعَلْنَاهُنَّ آبَكَارَ ۚ عَرَبًا ۚ أَتْرَابًا ۚ لِأَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ ۚ ثَلَاثَةٌ ۚ مِّنَ
الْأَوَّلِينَ ۚ وَثَلَاثَةٌ ۚ مِّنَ الْآخِرِينَ ۚ وَاصْحَابُ الشِّمَالِ ۚ مَا أَصْحَابُ الشِّمَالِ ۚ
فِي سُنُورٍ ۚ وَحَبِيبٍ ۚ وَظِلٍّ مِّنْ يَحْتُمُونَ ۚ لَا بَارِدٌ وَلَا كَرِيمٌ ۚ إِنَّهُمْ
كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُتْرَفِينَ ۚ وَكَانُوا يُصِرُّونَ عَلَى الْحِنثِ الْعَظِيمِ ۚ وَكَانُوا
يَقُولُونَ ۚ أَهَذَا بَشَرًا مِّثْلَنَا وَكَانَ تَرَابًا ۚ وَإِنَّا لَمُبْعُوثُونَ ۚ وَأَوَاهُوا لَآلِئِ الْأَوَّلِينَ ۚ
قُلْ إِنَّ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ لَمَجْمُوعُونَ ۚ لِيَوْمٍ مَّعْلُومٍ ۚ ثُمَّ
إِنكُم أَتِيهَا ۚ النَّفَّاثُونَ الْمَكِيدُونَ ۚ لَا يَأْكُلُونَ مِنْ شَجَرٍ مِّنْ زُفُورٍ ۚ فَتَالِئُونَ
مِنْهَا الْبُطُونَ ۚ فَشَرِبُونَ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْحَبِيرِ ۚ فَتُفَرِّقُونَ شَرِبَ الْهَلِيلُ ۚ
هَذَا نُزْلُهُ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ۚ نَحْنُ خَلَقْنَكُمْ فَلَوْلَا تَصَدَّقُونَ ۚ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ
مَّا تُمْنُونَ ۚ أَأَنْتُمْ تَخْلُقُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْخَالِقُونَ ۚ نَحْنُ قَدَرْنَا بَيْنَكُمْ
الْمَوْتَ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَسْبُوقِينَ ۚ عَلَىٰ أَن تُبَدِّلَ أَمْثَالَكُمْ وَنُنشِئَكُمْ فِي مَا لَا
تَعْلَمُونَ ۚ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ النَّشْأَةَ الْأُولَىٰ فَلَوْلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ۚ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَّا
تَحْرُثُونَ ۚ أَأَنْتُمْ تَزْرَعُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الزَّارِعُونَ ۚ لَوْ نَشَاءُ لَجَعَلْنَاهُ حُطَامًا



Eternal youths⁹ shall go round them briskly with brimful goblets and beakers and cups of wine from a flowing spring, which will neither cause them giddiness nor affect their sense.¹⁰ And they shall present before them every kind of tasty fruit, whichever they may choose; and the flesh of fowls, whichever they may desire.¹¹ And for them there shall be beautiful-eyed houris, as lovely as well-guarded pearls.¹² All this they will receive in reward for what they had done in the world. There they shall neither hear vain talk nor sinful speech.¹³ Whatever they hear shall be right and pure.¹⁴ 17-26

And the people of the right hand: —Oh, how fortunate will be the people of the right hand ! They shall be among thornless lote-trees,¹⁵ and piled up bananas, one upon the other, and outspread shade and ever flowing waters and abundant fruit¹⁶ neither failing in supply nor forbidden, and in upraised couches. We shall create their wives anew and make them virgins,¹⁷ lovers of their husbands¹⁸ and of equal age.¹⁹ All this is for the people of the right hand. A good number of them will be from among the former people and a good number also from among those of latter day. 27-40

And the people of the left hand:—Oh, how unfortunate will be the people of the left hand ! They will be in the scorching wind and the boiling waters and the shadow of black smoke, which will be neither cool nor refreshing. These will be the people who had lived in ease and comfort before meeting this fate. They persiated in heinous sin²⁰ and used to say, "What, when we are dead and become dust and bones, shall we be raised up again? And our forefathers too, who have gone before?" Say to them, "Surely, the former and the latter, all shall be gathered together one day, the hour of which has already been appointed. Then, O deviators and deniers, you shall eat of the zaqqûm-tree²¹ and fill your bellies with it, and drink on top of that boiling water like the thirsty camel. This shall be the entertainment of the people of the left hand on the Day of Recompense. 41-56

We have created you;²² then why don't you confirm?²³ Have you ever considered the spermdrop that you emit ? Is it you who create the child from it, or are We the Creators?²⁴ We have distributed death among you,²⁵ and We are not helpless that We may change your forms and create you in another form that you do not know.²⁶ You already 57-62

know well your first creation. Why then you do not take heed?²⁷

[Cited from p. 299]

and the latter people "One group of them has expressed the view that the "former people" were the communities that passed away since the time of the Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) till the time of the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), and the "people of the latter day" those who will have lived in the world since the advent of the Holy Prophet till the Day of Resurrection. Accordingly the verse would mean, "The number of the *Sābiqin* (the Foremost in Faith and good deeds) among the people who passed away during the thousands of years before the advent of the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) would be greater, and the number of those who would attain to the rank of the *Sābiqin* among those people who have been born since the advent of the Holy Prophet, or will be born till the Day of Resurrection, will be less." The second group says that the former and the latter in this verse imply the former and the latter people of the Holy Prophet's own *Ummah* itself. That is, in his *Ummah* the people belonging to the earliest period were the former among whom the number of the *Sābiqin* will be greater, and the people of the later periods are the latter among whom the number of the *Sābiqin* will be smaller. The third group holds the view that this implies the former and the latter people of every Prophet's own *Ummah*. That is, there will be numerous *Sābiqin* among the earliest followers of every Prophet, but among his later followers their number will decrease. The words of the verse bear all the three meanings, and possibly all three are implied, for there is no contradiction between them. Besides, they give another meaning also and that too is correct, every early period of a Prophet's following the proportion of the *Sābiqin* in human population would be greater and in the later period less, for the number of the workers of good and right does not increase at the rate of increase of the human populations. They may be more numerous as against the *Sābiqin* of the earliest period but on the whole their number as against the world population goes on becoming less and less.

9. This implies boys who will ever remain boys and stay young. Hadrat A'ī and Hadrat Hasan Basrī say that these will be those children of the people, who died before reaching their maturity; therefore, they will neither have any good works to their credit for which they may be rewarded, nor any evil deeds for which they may be punished. But obviously, this could imply those people who would not deserve Paradise. For, as for the true believers, about them Allah has guaranteed in the Qur'ān that their children will be joined with them in Paradise (Al-Tīr 2). This is also supported by the *Hadīth*, which Abū Da'ūd Tayālīs, Jaqarān and Bazzār have related on the authority of Hadrat Anas and Hadrat

Sam'ra bil Jundub, according to which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) said that the children of the polytheists will be attendants of the people of Paradise. For further explanation, see E.N. 26 of As-Saffat, E.N. 19 of At-Tur.

10 For explanation, see E.N. 27 of As-Saffat, E.N. 22 of Surah Muhammad E.N. 18 of At-Tur.

11 For explanation, see E.N. 17 of Surah At-Tur.

12 For explanation, see E.N.'s 28, 29 of As-Saffat, E.N. 42, of Ad-Dukhan, E.N. 61 of Ar-Rahman.

13 This is one of the major blessings of Paradise, which has been mentioned at several places in the Qur'an, viz. that in Paradise human ears will remain secure against idle and frivolous talk, lying, backbiting slander, invective, boasting and bragging, taunts and mockery, satire and sarcasm. It will not be a society of foul-mouthed, indecent people who will throw mud at each other, but a society of noble and civilized people free of such frivolities. A person who has been blessed with some decency of manner and sense by Allah can very well feel what an agony it is in worldly life a hope of deliverance from which has been given to man in Paradise.

14. Some commentators and translators have taken the words, *illa qilan salām-an salāmā*, to mean that in Paradise one will hear only the greeting of 'Peace, peace' on every side, the correct view, however, is that it implies healthy and wholesome speech, i.e. such speech as may be free of the vices and Ulemashev, faults and evils, that have been mentioned in the preceding sentence. Here the word *salām* has been used nearly in the same sense as the English word *safe*.

15 That is, lote-trees without thorns on them. This will be a superior kind of the lote-tree to be only found in Paradise, and its fruit likewise will be much superior to that found in the world.

16 The word *la maqtū'ah* of the Text means 'This fruit will neither be seasonal that its supply may fail when the season is over, nor its production will cease as it happens in a garden after its fruits has been picked. But in Paradise every kind of fruit will remain available in abundance in every season and will continue to be produced and supplied no matter how much of it is consumed. And *la mamnū'ah* means that there will be no prohibition or hindrance in obtaining fruit as it is in the gardens of the world, nor will it be out of reach because of thorns or height.

17 This signifies the virtuous women of the world, who will enter Paradise on the basis of their faith and good works. Allah will make them young no matter how aged they might have died in the world; will make them beautiful whether or not they were beautiful in the world; and will make them virgins

whether they died virgins in the world or after bearing children. If their husbands also entered Paradise with them, they would be joined with them, otherwise Allah will wed them to another dweller in Paradise. This very explanation of this verse has been reported from the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in several *Aḥādīth*. According to *Shamā'il Tirmidhī*, an old woman requested the Holy Prophet to pray for her admission to Paradise. The Holy Prophet replied "No old woman will enter Paradise." Hearing this the woman went back crying. Thereupon the Holy Prophet said to the people, "Tell her that she will not enter Paradise as an old woman, for Allah says 'We shall create them anew and make them virgins.'" Ibn Abī Ḥātim has related, on the authority of Hadrat Salamah bin Yazid, that he heard the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) explain this verse, thus "This supersedes the women of the world, whether they died virgins or married." Ṭabarānī contains a lengthy tradition related from Hadrat Umm Salamah according to which she asked the Holy Prophet the meaning of the several references in the Qur'an to the women of Paradise. In answer, he explained this very verse and said: "These are the women who died as aged and decayed women, with sticky eyes and gray hair; after this old age Allah will again make them young and virgins." Hadrat Umm Salamah asked "If a woman had several husbands in the world, one after the other, to whom will she belong in Paradise?" The Holy Prophet replied "She will be asked to make her own choice, and she will choose the one who had the best moral character. She will say 'O my Lord, make me his wife, for he was the best in his conduct and dealings with me.' O Umm Salamah, good moral conduct has carried off all the good of this world and the Hereafter." (For further explanation, see E.N. 51 of Sūrah Ar-Rahmān).

18 The word *'urubān* is used for the best feminine qualities of the woman in Arabic. This signifies a woman who is graceful and elegant, well-mannered and eloquent, and brimful of feminine feelings, who loves her husband with all her heart, and whose husband also loves her with all his heart.

19 This can have two meanings (1) That they will be of equal age with their husbands, and (2) that they will be of equal age among themselves, i.e. all the women in Paradise will be of the same age and will eternally stay young. Both these meanings may be correct at one and the same time, i.e. these women may be of equal age among themselves and their husbands also may be made of equal age with them. According to a *Ḥadīth*, "When the dwellers of Paradise enter it, their bodies will be without hair, their moustaches will be just appearing, but will yet be beardless, they will be handsome and fair-complexioned, with sturdy bodies and collyrium-stained eyes; they will all be 33 years of age." (Musnad Ahmad Marwiyat *Ali' Huratrah*). Almost the same theme has been related in Tirmidhi by Hadrat Mu'adh bin Jabal and Hadrat Abū Sa'īd Khudri also.

20 That is, "Their prosperity had an adverse effect on them. Instead of being grateful to Allah Almighty, they had become deniers of His blessings. Lost in pleasure seeking they had forgotten God and persisted in heinous sinning. "Heinous sinning" includes disbelief, polytheism and atheism as well as every grave sin of morality and conduct."

21 For the explanation of *zaqqinū*, see E.N. 34 of *As-Shāffat*.

22 The arguments from here to verse 74 provide the reasoning to prove both the doctrines of *Tauhīd* and of Hereafter rationally. For it was there two basic doctrines of the Holy Prophet's teaching that the people of Makkah were debating and objecting to at that time.

23 That is, "Why don't you confirm that We alone are your Lord and God and We have the power to create you once again?"

24 In this brief sentence a very important question has been put before man. Apart from all other things in the world, if man only considers as to how he himself has come into being, he can then neither have any doubts left about the doctrine of *Tauhīd* presented by the Qur'ān nor about its doctrine of the Hereafter. The process of man's own creation starts when the male has conveyed his sperm to the womb of the female. But the question is: Has the sperm by itself become endowed with the capability of producing a child, and necessarily a human child? Or, has it been created by man himself, or, by another than God? And, is it in the power of the man, or of the woman, or of another agency in the world, to cause conception by this sperm? Then, who is responsible for the gradual formation and development of the foetus in the mother's womb, its shaping and moulding into a unique child, the provision in a particular proportion of different mental and physical powers and qualities in each child, so that it develops into a unique person, except One God? Has another than God any role to play in this? Is it done by the parents themselves? Or, by a doctor? Or, by the prophets or saints, who were themselves created in this very way? Or, by the sun and the moon and the stars, which are themselves subject to a law? Or, by nature, which is devoid of any knowledge, wisdom, will and authority? Then, is it also in the power of another than God to decide whether the child is to be a boy or a girl? Whether it is to be beautiful or ugly, strong or weak, blind and deaf and a cripple or sound-bodied, intelligent or stupid? Then, is it another than God who decides as to people of what calibre, good or bad, are to be created in a particular nation at a particular time, who would cause its rise or fall? If a person is not obdurate and stubborn, he will himself realize that no rational answer can be given to these questions on the basis of polytheism and atheism. Their rational answer is only one and it is this: Man is wholly and entirely the creation of God, and when the

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فَظَلَّمْتُمْ تَفَكَّهُونَ⁶⁵ إِنَّا لَمُفَرِّمُونَ⁶⁶ لَهَا بَلْ نَحْنُ⁶⁷ مَحْرُومُونَ⁶⁸ أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ الْمَاءَ
 الَّذِي تَشْرَبُونَ⁶⁹ إِنَّا أَنزَلْنَاهُ⁷⁰ مِنَ الْمُزْنِ⁷¹ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنْزِلُونَ⁷² كَلَّا
 فَسَاءَ جَعَلْنَاهُ⁷³ أَجَابًا⁷⁴ فَلَوْلَا تَشْكُرُونَ⁷⁵ أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ النَّارَ الَّتِي تُورُونَ⁷⁶ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ
 أَنْشَأْتُمْ شَجَرَتَهَا⁷⁷ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنْشِئُونَ⁷⁸ نَحْنُ جَعَلْنَاهَا تَذْكِرَةً⁷⁹ وَزُجْرًا⁸⁰
 لِلْمُفْسِدِينَ⁸¹ فَسَيَحْمِلُهُ⁸² رَبُّكَ الْعَظِيمُ⁸³ فَلَا أَقْسَمُ بِمَوْقِعِ الشَّجَرَةِ⁸⁴ وَ
 إِنَّهُ لَقَسَمٌ⁸⁵ لِّوَعْلَمُونَ⁸⁶ عَظِيمٌ⁸⁷ إِنَّهُ لَقُرْآنٌ⁸⁸ كَرِيمٌ⁸⁹ فِي كِتَابٍ⁹⁰ مَّكْنُونٍ⁹¹ لَا
 يَسْمَعُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ⁹² تَنْزِيلٌ⁹³ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ⁹⁴ أَفَبِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ⁹⁵ أَنْتُمْ
 مُدْهِمُونَ⁹⁶ وَأَنْتُمْ تَجْعَلُونَ⁹⁷ رِزْقَكُمْ⁹⁸ أَنْتُمْ تُكَذِّبُونَ⁹⁹ فَلَوْلَا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ¹⁰⁰ الْحُلُمُومَةُ¹⁰¹
 وَأَنْتُمْ حَمِيذٌ¹⁰² تَنْظُرُونَ¹⁰³ وَلَكُمْ¹⁰⁴ نَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ¹⁰⁵ إِلَيْهِ مِنْكُمْ¹⁰⁶ وَلَكِنْ لَا تُبْصِرُونَ¹⁰⁷
 فَلَوْلَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ غَيْرَ مَدِينِينَ¹⁰⁸ تُرْجَوْنَهَا¹⁰⁹ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ¹¹⁰ فَأَمَّا إِنْ
 كَانَ مِنَ الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ¹¹¹ فَزُودُوا¹¹² وَرِيحَانٌ¹¹³ وَجَنَّتْ¹¹⁴ نَعِيمُهُ¹¹⁵ وَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ
 مِنَ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ¹¹⁶ فَسَلَامٌ¹¹⁷ لَكَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ¹¹⁸ وَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ
 الْمَكِيدِينَ¹¹⁹ الصَّالِينَ¹²⁰ فَزُلْ¹²¹ مِنْ حَيْثُ¹²² وَتَصْلِيَةٌ¹²³ جَاحِدٌ¹²⁴ إِنْ هَذَا
 لَهُوَ حَقُّ الْيَقِينِ¹²⁵ فَسَيَحْمِلُهُ¹²⁶ رَبُّكَ الْعَظِيمُ¹²⁷

Have you ever considered the seeds that you sow? Is it you who cause them to grow into crops, or do We?⁶³⁻⁶⁷ If We so pleased We could turn these crops into chaff, and you would then be left lamenting, "We have incurred penalties! Ah, we are undone!"

Have you ever seen (with open eyes) the water that you drink? Is it you who cause it to rain from the clouds, or do We?⁶⁸⁻⁷² If We so

pleased We could make it salt.³⁰ Then why don't you be grateful!³¹

Have you ever considered the fire that you kindle? Is it you who have created its tree,³² or are We its Creator "We have made it a means of remembrance³³ and a provision of life for the needy."³⁴ 71-73

So, O Prophet, glorify the name of your Lord, the Supreme!³⁵ 75

But nay!³⁶ I swear by the positions of the stars—and it is a great oath, only if you knew it—that this is a glorious Qur'an,³⁷ inscribed in a well-guarded Book,³⁸ which none can touch but the purified.³⁹ This has been sent down by the Lord of the worlds. Then, do you regard this discourse as unworthy of serious attention?⁴⁰ And do you have in this blessing only this share that you deny it?⁴¹ 75-82

If you think you are subject to nobody, and you deem you are right in thinking so, then why don't you restore to the dying person his soul when it has come up to the throat and you are helplessly watching that he is at the point of death? At that time We are closer to him than you, but you do not see Us. Then, if the dying person be of those nearest to Us, for him there is comfort and good provision and the blissful Garden. And if he be of the people of the right hand, he is greeted with "Peace be to you! You are of the people of the right!" And if he be of the deniers, gone astray, his entertainment is of boiling water and burning in Hell. 83-94

All this is absolute truth. So, O Prophet, glorify the name of your Lord, the Supreme!⁴² 95-96

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truth is this, what right has this man, the creation of God, to claim freedom and independence as against his Creator, or serve another beside Him?

As it is for *Tauhid*, so it is with regard to the Hereafter too. Man is created from a germ which cannot be seen without a powerful microscope. This germ combines in the darkness of the mother's body with the ovum (female germ), which is like itself an insignificant microscopic germ. Then by their combination a tiny living cell comes into being, which is the starting-point of human life. This cell also is too small to be seen without a microscope. Allah develops this insignificant cell in the mother's womb for nine months or so into a living human and when its development and formation becomes complete, the mother's body itself pushes it out to raise a storm in the world. All human beings have been born

in the world in this very way and are witnessing day and night this phenomenon of the birth of human beings like themselves. After this, only a foolish person could assert that the God Who is creating human beings in this way today would not be able to create the human beings created by Himself in some other way tomorrow.

25. That is, "Like your birth your death too, is under Our control. We decide as to who is to die in the mother's womb itself, who is to die soon after birth, and who is to die at a later stage. No power in the world can cause death to a person before the time appointed for his death by Us, nor can keep him alive after it even for a moment. The dying ones die in big hospitals even before the eyes of eminent doctors, and the doctors themselves also die at their appointed time. Never has anyone been able to know the time of death in advance, nor has anyone been able to avert the approaching death, nor to find out as to how and where and by what means will a certain person die."

26. That is, "Just as We were not powerless to create you in your present form and appearance, so also We are not powerless to change the method of your creation and bring you into being in another form and shape with another set of qualities and characteristics. Today the method We have adopted for your creation is that conception takes place by your sperm then you are gradually formed and developed in your mother's womb, and then you are brought out as a child. This method of creation also has been devised by Us. But this is not the only method apart from which We may not be knowing, or may not be able to adopt, any other method. On the Day of Resurrection We can create you in the form of the man of the same age at which you died. Today We have set one particular measure for your sight and hearing and other faculties. But this is not the only measure that We have for man, which We may not have the power to change. On the Day of Resurrection We shall change it absolutely, so much so that you will be able to see and hear things which you cannot see and cannot hear here. Today your skin and your limbs and your eyes do not possess the power of speech. But, it is We Who have given the tongue the power of speech; so We are not powerless to cause your every limb and every part of the skin of your body to speak by Our command on the Day of Resurrection. Today you live up to a certain age and then die. Your this living and dying also is controlled by a law ordained by Us. Tomorrow We can make another law to control your life under which you may never die. Today you can endure punishment only to a certain extent: you cannot survive if the punishment is increased beyond it. This rule also has been made by Us. Tomorrow We can make another rule for you under which you will be able to suffer much severer punishments endlessly, and death would not come to you even if you were given the severest torment. Today you cannot imagine that an old man would return to youth, that he could never become ill, that a young man could

never be old, and, that he could stay young for ever and ever. But youth here changes into old age according to the biological laws made by Us. Tomorrow We can make some other laws for your life under which every old man may become young as soon as he entered Paradise and stay young and healthy eternally.

27 That is, "You already know how you were created in the first instance—how the sperm was transferred from the loins of the father by which you came into being, how you were nourished in the mother's womb, which was no less dark than the grave, and formed into a living human being, how an insignificant speck was developed and endowed with the heart and brain, eyes and ears, and hands and feet, and how it was blessed with the wonderful faculties of intellect and sense, knowledge and wisdom, workmanship and inventiveness, etc. Is this miracle in any way less wonderful than raising the dead back to life? And when you are witnessing this wonderful miracle with your own eyes and are yourselves a living evidence of it in the world, why don't you then learn the lesson that the same God Who by His power is causing this miracle to take place day and night, can also cause the miracle of life after death, Resurrection and Hell and Heaven to take place by the same power?"

28. The above question drew the people's attention to the truth that they have been developed and nourished by Allah Almighty and have come into being by His act of creation. Now this second question draws their attention to this important truth that the provisions which sustain them, are also created only by Allah for them, as if to say, "Just as in your own creation human effort has nothing more to do than that your father may cast the sperm in your mother, so in the supply of the provisions for you also human effort has nothing more to do than that the farmer should sow the seed in the soil. The land in which cultivation is done, was not made by you. The power of growth to the soil was not granted by you. The substances in it that become the means of your food are not provided by you. The seed that you sow is not made capable for growth by you. The capability in every seed that from it should sprout up the tree of the same species of whose seed it is, has not been created by you. The process for changing this cultivation into blooming crops that is working under the soil and of arranging the required kind of weather and air and water above it does not owe anything in any way to your planning and skill. All this is the manifestation of Allah's power and providence. Then, when you have come into being only by His act of creation and are being sustained by His provision, how can you then have the right to pose yourself as independent of Him, or serve another than Him as your deity?"

Although apparently this verse reasons out *Tauhid*, yet if one considers its theme a little more deeply, one finds in it the argument for the Hereafter, too. The seed that is sown in the soil is by itself dead, but when the farmer buries it under the soil Allah infuses it with plant life, which puts out sprouts and blooms into

spring. Thus, these countless bodies are rising from the dead in front of our eyes. Is this miracle in any way less wonderful so that a person may regard the other wonderful miracle of the life hereafter, which is being foretold by the Qur'an as impossible?

29. That is, "We have not only made arrangements of satisfying your hunger but also of satisfying your thirst. This water that is even more essential for your life than bread has been arranged by Us, not by you. The seas in the earth have been created by Us. It is the heat of Our sun that causes their water to evaporate, and it is Our winds that cause the vapours to rise. Then it is by Our power and wisdom that the vapours collect and form into clouds. Then, by Our command the clouds divide in a particular proportion and spread over different regions of the earth so that the share of the water appointed for a particular region, should reach it. And in the upper atmosphere also We bring about the cool that causes the vapours to change back into water. We have not only brought you into being but are also busy making all these arrangements for your sustenance without which you could not survive at all. Then, when the fact is that you have come into being by Our act of creation, are eating Our provisions and drinking Our water, wherefrom have you got the right that you should pose to be independent of Us and serve another beside Us?"

30. In this sentence an important manifestation of Allah's power and wisdom has been pointed out. Among the wonderful properties that Allah has created in water one property also is that no matter what different substances are dissolved in water, when it changes into vapour under the effect of heat, it leaves behind all adulterations and evaporates only with its original and actual component elements. Had it not possessed this property the dissolved substances also would have evaporated along with the water vapours. In this case the vapours that arise from the oceans would have contained the sea salt, which would have made the soil saline and uncultivable wherever it rained. Then, neither could man have survived by drinking that water, nor could it help grow any vegetation. Now, can a man possessed of any common sense claim that this wise property in water has come about by itself under some blind and deaf law of nature? This characteristic by virtue of which sweet, pure water is distilled from saltish seas and falls as rain, and then serves as a source of water-supply and irrigation in the form of rivers, canals, springs and wells, provides a clear proof of the fact that the Providence has endowed water with this property thoughtfully and deliberately for the purpose that it may become a means of sustenance for His creatures. The creatures that could be sustained by salt water were created by Him in the sea and there they flourish and multiply. But the creatures that He created on the land and in the air, stood in need of sweet water for their sustenance and before making arrangement

of the rainfall for its supply He created this property in water that at evaporation it should rise clear and free of everything dissolved in it.

31 In other words, "Why do you commit this ingratitude in that some of you regard the rainfall as a favour of the gods, and some others think that the rising of the clouds from the sea and their raining as water is a natural cycle that is working by itself, and still others, while acknowledging it as a mercy and blessing of God, do not admit that God has any such right on them that they should bow to Him alone? How is it that while you derive so much benefit from this great blessing of Allah, in return you commit sins of disbelief and polytheism and disobedience of Him?"

32 The tree here either implies the tree that supplies wood for lighting a fire, or the trees of *markh* and *sfar*, green sticks of which were struck one against the other to produce sparks in ancient Arabia.

33 Making the fire "a means of remembrance" means "The fire by virtue of its quality of being kindled at all times reminds man of his forgotten lesson that without it human life could not be any different from animal life. Because of the fire only did man learn to cook food for eating instead of eating it raw like the animals, and then new and ever new avenues to industry and invention went on opening up before him. Obviously, if God had not created the means of kindling the fire and the substances that could be kindled, man's inventive potentialities would have remained dormant. But the man has forgotten that his Creator is a wise Sustainer, Who created him with human capabilities on the one hand, and on the other, created such materials on the earth by which his these capabilities could become active and operative. If he is not lost in heedlessness, the fire alone is enough to remind him of the favours and bounties of his Creator, which he is so freely enjoying in the world."

34 The word *muqwin* in the original has been interpreted differently by the lexicographers. Some have taken it in the meaning of the travellers who have halted in the desert, some in the meaning of a hungry man, and some take it in the meaning of all those who derive benefit from the fire, whether it is the benefit of cooking food or of light or of heat.

35 That is, "Mention His blessed name and proclaim that He is free from and far above the defects and faults and weaknesses that the pagans and polytheists ascribe to Him, and which underlie every creed of disbelief and every argument that is presented by the deniers of the Hereafter."

36 That is, "The truth is not what you seem to think it is." Here, the use of the word *la* (nay) before swearing an oath by the Qur'an's being Allah's

Revelation by itself shows that the oath has been sworn to refute certain objections that the disbelievers were raising with regard to the Qur'an.

37 "The positions of the stars" the positions and phases and orbits of the stars and planets. The oath implies that just as the system of the celestial bodies is firm and stable, so also is this Divine Word firm and stable. The same God Who has created that system has also sent down this Word. Just as there exists perfect consistency and harmony among the countless stars and planets found in the countless galaxies of the Universe, whereas apparently they seem to be scattered, so also this Book presents a perfectly consistent, and systematic code of life in which detailed guidance has been given, on the basis of belief, about moral modes of worship, civilization and culture, economic and social life, law and justice, peace and war, in short, about every aspect of human life, and there is nothing out of harmony with the other, whereas this system of thought has been expressed in scattered verses and discourses given on different occasions. Then, just as the system of the heavens set and planned by God is stable and unalterable, and does not ever admit of the slightest variation, so also are the truths and instructions given in this Book stable and unalterable: no part of these can be changed or displaced in any way.

38 This implies the well guarded Tablet (*laḥḥ-mahfūḍ*). For it the word *Kitāb makhnūn* has been used, which means a writing kept hidden, i.e. a writing that is inaccessible to all. The Qur'an's having been inscribed in this well guarded Book means that before its being sent down to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) it lay inscribed in the Divine Writ of Destiny in which there is no possibility of any alteration or corruption taking place, for it is inaccessible to every kind of creation.

39 This is a refutation of the accusation that the disbelievers used to level against the Qur'an. They regarded the Holy Prophet as a sorcerer and asserted that he was being inspired with the Word by the jinn and satans. An answer to it has been given at several places in the Qur'an, e.g. in Surah Ash Shu'arā', where it has been said "This (hucid Book) has not been brought down by satans, nor does this work beleave them, nor are they able to do it. They have indeed been kept out of its hearing" (vv. 210-212). The same theme has been expressed here, Saying "None but the purified can touch it." That is to say "Not to speak of its being brought down by the satans, or its being tampered within any way when it is being revealed, none but the pure angels can come anywhere near it when it is being revealed from the well-guarded Tablet (*Laḥḥ-mahfūḍ*, to the Prophet." The word *mutahharin* has been used for the angels in the sense that Allah has kept them free of every kind of impure feeling and desire.

This same commentary of this verse has been given by Anas b n Malik, Ibn Abi Sa'id bin Jubair, 'Ikrimah, Mujāhid, Qatādah, Abul 'Ā'iyah, Suddī, Dahhāk and Ibn Zaid, and the same also fits in with the context. For the context itself shows that after refuting the false concepts of the Makkan disbelievers about *Tauhid* and the Hereafter, now their false accusations against the Qur'ān are being answered, and by swearing an oath by the positions of the stars, it is being stated that the Qur'ān is an exalted Book, which is inscribed in the well guarded Divine Writ, in which there is no possibility of any interference by any creation, and it is revealed to the Prophet in such a safe way that none but the pure angels can touch it.

Some commentators have taken *lā* in this verse in the sense of prohibition, and have interpreted the verse to mean: "None who is unclean should touch it." Although some other commentators take *lā* in the sense of negation and interpret the verse to mean "None but the clean and pure touch this Book," they express the opinion that this negation is a prohibition in the same way as the Holy Prophet's saying is a prohibition: "A Muslim is a brother of a Muslim, he does not treat him unjustly." Although in it, it has been said that a Muslim does not treat the other Muslim unjustly, yet it enjoins that a Muslim is not to treat the other Muslim unjustly. Likewise, although in this verse it has been stated that none but the clean and pure angels touch this Book, yet it enjoins that unless a person is purified, he should not touch it.

The fact, however, is that this commentary does not conform to the context of the verse. Independent of the context, one may take this meaning from its words, but if considered in the context in which the verse occurs, one does not see any ground for saying that "None is to touch this Book except the clean and purified people." For the addressees here are the disbelievers and they are being told, as if to say "This Book has been sent down by Allah Lord of the worlds. Therefore, your suspicion that the satans inspire the Prophet with it, is wrong." What could be the occasion here to enunciate the *Shari'ah* injunction that no one should touch it without purification? The most that one could say in this regard is that although this verse has not been sent down to enjoin this command, yet the context points out that just as only the purified (*mufahharin*) can touch this Book in the presence of Allah, so in the world also the people who at least believe in its being Divine Word should avoid touching it in the impure and unclean state.

The following are the traditions that bear upon this subject

- 1) Imam Mālik has related in Mu'attā this tradition on the authority of Abdullah bin Abi Bakr Muhammad bin 'Amm bin Hazm "The written instructions that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace, had sent to the Yamanite chiefs by the hand of 'Amm bin Hazm contained this instruction

also: *Lā yamass-ul Qur'an a illā ṭāhir-un*. No one should touch the Qur'an except the pure one." This same thing has been related by Abū Da'ūd from Imām Zuhri in the Traditions which are immediately traced to the Holy Prophet (*umrāsīl*), saying that the writing that he had seen with Abū Bakr Muḥammad bin 'Amr bin Ḥazm contained this instruction as well;

- (2) The traditions from Ḥadrat 'Alī in which he says: "Nothing prevented the Holy Prophet of Allah from reciting the Qur'an but the state of uncleanness due to sexual intercourse." (Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'i, Tirmidhi).
- (3) The tradition of Ibn 'Umar in which he states: "The Holy Messenger of Allah said: The menstruating woman and the one who is unclean on account of sexual intercourse should not read any portion of the Qur'an." (Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhi).
- (4) The tradition of Bukhārī in which it has been said that the letter which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) sent to Heraclius, the Roman emperor, also contained this verse of the Qur'an: *Yā ahl al-Kitāb-l ta'ālaw illā kalimat-in sawā'a-un beinana wa bainakum ...*

The views that have been related from the Holy Prophet's Companions and their immediate followers are as follows:

Salman, the Persian, saw no harm in reading the Qur'an without the ablutions, but even according to him touching the Qur'an with the hand in this state was not permissible. The same also was the view of Ḥadrat Sa'd bin Abī Waqqās and Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar. And Ḥadrat Hasan Basri and Ibrahim Nakha'i also regarded touching the Qur'an with the hand without the ablutions as disapproved, (*Al-Jassās, Al-kān al-Qur'an*). The same has been reported from 'Aṣā', Ṭa'us, Sha'bī and Qasim bin Muḥammad also. (Ibn Qudamah, *Al-Mughnī*). However, according to all of them, reading the Qur'an without touching it with the hand, or reciting it from memory, was permissible even without the ablutions.

Ḥadrat 'Umar, Ḥadrat 'Alī, Ḥadrat Hasan Basri, Ḥadrat Ibrahim Nakha'i and Imām Zuhri regarded reading the Qur'an in the state of uncleanness due to sexual intercourse and menstruation and bleeding after childbirth as disapproved. But Ibn 'Abbās held the view, and the same also was his practice, that one could recite from memory the portion of the Qur'an that one usually recited as one's daily practice. When Ḥadrat Sa'id bin al-Musayyab and Sa'id bin Jubair were asked about their view in this regard, they replied: "Is not the Qur'an preserved in the memory of such a person? What then is the harm in reciting it?" (*Al-Mughnī, Al-Muḥallā* by Ibn Ḥazm).

The following are the viewpoints of the jurists on this subject:

The Hanafī viewpoint has been explained by Imām 'Alā-'uddin al-Kashānī in his *Bada'i as-Sanā'i*, thus "Just as it is not permissible to offer the Prayer without the ablutions, so also it is not permissible to touch the Qur'ān without the ablutions. However, if the Qur'ān is in a case or a cover, it may be touched." According to some jurists, the case or cover implies the binding, and according to others, the bag or the envelope or the wrapper in which the Qur'ān is kept and can also be taken out. Likewise, the books of the commentary also should not be touched without the ablutions, nor anything else in which a Qur'ānic verse may have been written. However, the books of *Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence) may be touched although preferably they too may not be touched without the ablutions, for they also contain Qur'ānic verses as part of argument and reasoning. Some Hanafī jurists hold the opinion that only that part of the Qur'ān where the Text may have been written should not be touched without the ablutions. As for the margins there is no harm in touching it, whether they are blank or contain notes on the Text. The correct thing, however, is that the margins also are a part of the Book and touching them amounts to touching the Book. As for reading the Qur'ān, it is permissible without the ablutions." In *Fatāwa 'Ālamgiri* children have been made an exception from this rule. The Qur'ān can be given in the children's hand for teaching purposes whether they are in the state of ablutions or not.

The Shafī'i viewpoint has been stated by Imām Nawawī in *Al-Minhāj*, thus, "As it is for the Prayer and the circumambulation of the Ka'bah, it is also forbidden to handle the Qur'ān or to touch a leaf of it without the ablutions. Likewise, it is also forbidden to touch the binding of the Qur'ān, and also a bag, or a box containing the Qur'ān, or a tablet on which a part of the Qur'ān may have been written for instructional purposes. However, it is lawful to touch the baggage of a person containing the Qur'ānic inscription. A child may touch the Qur'ān without the ablutions, and a person without ablutions may turn over a leaf with a piece of wood, or something else, if he wants to read the Qur'ān.

The Mālikī position as stated in *Al-Fiqh 'alal-Madhāhib al-'Arbī* is: They concur with the other jurists in this that the state of ablutions is a prerequisite for touching the Qur'ān, but in the matter of imparting instruction in the Qur'ān they make both the teacher and the taught an exception from the rule, and allow even a menstruating woman to touch the Qur'ān if she is engaged in learning or teaching it. Ibn Qadāmah has cited in *Al-Mughnī* this saying of Imām Mālik: Although reading the Qur'ān in the state of uncleanness due to sexual intercourse is forbidden, the woman who is discharging the menses is permitted to read it, for she would forget her recitations if prohibited from reading the Qur'ān for a long time.

The Hanbali viewpoint as stated by Ibn Qadāmah is as follows: In the state of uncleanness due to sexual intercourse and menstruation and bleeding after childbirth it is not permissible to read the Qur'ān or any complete verse of it. However, it is permissible to recite *bismillah*, *al-hamdu-lillah*, etc. for although these also are parts of one or the other verse, their recitation does not amount to recitation of the Qur'ān. As for handling the Qur'ān, it is not permissible in any case without the ablutions. However, one is not forbidden to touch a letter, or a book of *Fiqh*, or some other writing containing a Qur'ānic verse. Likewise, one may handle even without the ablutions, something that contains the Qur'ān. The state of ablutions is also no pre-requisite for handling the books of exegesis. Furthermore, if a person who is not in the state of ablutions is required to handle the Qur'ān under an immediate need, he may do so after purification with the dust (*ayyagunum*). * *Al-Fiqh 'alal-Madhāhib al-'Arabiah* contains this ruling also of the Hanbali *Fiqh*: It is not right for the children to handle the Qur'ān without ablutions even when receiving instruction in it, and it is the duty of their guardians to make them perform the ablutions before they give the Qur'ān to them.

The Zāhiri viewpoint is that reading the Qur'ān and handling it is permissible under all conditions, whether one is without the ablutions, or unclean due to sexual intercourse, or even if the woman is menstruating. Ibn Ḥazm has discussed this question fully in *Al-Muqallā* (vol. I, pp. 77-84) and given arguments for the validity of this viewpoint and has concluded that none of the conditions laid down by the jurists for reading the Qur'ān and handling it, is supported by the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*.

40. Literally, *idhān* (from which *mudhīnūn* of the Text is derived) means to treat something with contempt, to deny its due importance, to regard it as unworthy of serious attention, to hold it in light esteem.

41. In his commentary of *taj'āluna rizqa-kum*, Inām Rāzi has expressed the view that probably the word *rizq* here means livelihood. Since the disbelieving Qaraish regarded the message of the Qur'ān as harmful to their economic interests and feared that if it succeeded it would deprive them of their means of livelihood, the verse may also mean this: "You have made the denial of this Qur'ān a question of your economic interests, and for you the question of the right and wrong is of no consequence; the only thing of real importance in your sight is the bread for the sake of which you would least hesitate to oppose the truth and adhere to the falsehood."

42. Ḥadrat 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir Juhni relates that when this verse was sent down the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) commanded that the people put it in their *rukū'*, i.e. they should recite *Subhāna Rabbi-yal-'Azīm* in *rukū'*.

position in the Prayer. And when the verse *Sabbih-ismi-Rabb-i-ka-A 'lā* was sent down, he enjoined that they put it in their *sajdah*, i.e. they should recite *Subhāna Rabb-i-yal-A 'lā* in *sajdah*. (Musnad Ahmad, Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Ḥibbān, Ḥākim). This show that even the most minor details of the procedure enjoined by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) for the Prayer are derived from the allusions given in the Qur'ān.